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ABSTRACT

This report contains a transcript of the presentations of the primary speakers at a consultation on day care and the public schools organized by The Interchurch Center in New York. In addition to the presentations, the report provides highlights from a round table discussion of the issues raised by the speakers. Presentations described preliminary findings of a national survey of state initiatives for preschool education which compares states, with and without legislative initiatives, in terms of impact on schools, the child care community, and families. Speakers also pointed out concerns of the National Black Child Development Institute about preschool care for racially ethnic children and challenged participants to view education from theological perspectives and to think deeply and broadly. Included in the report is the resolution on 4-year-olds in the public schools which was adopted May 22, 1986, by the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. (RH)

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CHILD CARE AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

What are the issues for the churches?

REPORT OF A CONSULTATION

April 11, 1986

The Interchurch Center, New York City

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CHILD CARE AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
What are the issues for the church?

Report of a Consultation
on April 11, 1986
The Interchurch Center, New York City

Co-sponored by Division of Church and Society and Division of Education and Ministry
National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA

Preface

On April 11,1986 a group of twenty invited participants gathered at the Interchurch Center in New York City to discuss Child Care and the Public Schools: What are the issues for the church? The list of participants is printed in the back of this consultation report and a quick perusal will show gathered around our table a sampling of national and local child care leaders, denominational staff, theologians, public school and public policy experts, local councils of churches, pastors, and day care providers.

This report contains a transcript of the primary presentors and a few highlights from the round table discussion. Fern Marx, a longtime advocate for child care, and public policy analyst, came from Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, where there is a study underway on Childcare for School Age Children in which she has been actively involved. She describes this study in part and shares some of the early learnings from it. Carla Curtis, staff member of the National Black Child Development Institute, spoke to us of the concerns the Institute has articulated for all of us about preschool care for racial ethnic children. Will Kennedy is Professor of Christian Education at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He challenged us to look at education through theological eyes and to think more deeply and broadly than we usually manage to do from our limited institutional perspectives.

Subsequent to the consultation on May 23, 1986, the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches passed a resolution on Four Year Olds in the Public Schools. This resolution is included for your information.

There is a theory of social change that points out that creative initiatives arise in the free spaces between institutional structures. The theory can be demonstrated in the happening of this consultation. In the complexity of organization at the NCCC, the Child Advocacy Office of the Division of Church and Society specializing in child care and the Education in the Society program unit with responsibility for public education in the Division of Education and Ministry worked together to mount the consultation and develop the resolution. Programmatic applications from this work will continue through both offices.

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Copies of the Consultation Report are available for $3.50. Make checks payable to "Child Advocacy Office". Send orders to Child Advocacy Office, NCCC Room 572, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115.

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FERN MARX
Wellesley College Center for Research on Women

* *

I want to begin by telling you briefly what our study is. Then I want to tell you that I am not presenting findings from our study but trying to establish a historical context for the debate that is going on and raise some pertinent issues to be dealt with as we look toward an expanded role of public schools.

The study is a joint study of Bank Street and Wellesley College Center for Research. It is funded by the Ford and Carnegie Foundations. From our vantage point at Wellesley, we are looking at, what is happening state by state in terms of state initiatives for preschool education in the context of existing programs and Title XX child care, trying to understand the shape of what's available for the early education of preschoolers across the nation. We are trying to describe this on a state basis and compare the states with and without legislative initiatives. Bank Street is looking at districts which have identified themselves as providing early childhood education and then moving down to the local school or district level to look at exemplary programs. They will do twelve case studies, looking at the impact of these programs, not on the child, but on the institutions of the school, the child care community and the family. This is a terribly important way of looking at things. We talk a great deal about whether child care is good or bad or indifferent in terms of child outcomes; we rarely discuss its impact on the institutions in which it is embedded. We hope that by the time we finish this study some 24 months from now, we will begin to be able to describe both the particular and the global, and begin to be able to understand what makes for exemplary legislative enactments and what are the components of exemplary programs.

As I come to the child care discussion in 1986, I have almost a "deja vu" experience. It seems to me that we have re-engaged in the debate about the role of the public schools after a quiet time of some ten years. I can remember about 1975 when Al Shanker engaged us in a heated debate about the schools being the logical place for all of child care and early childhood education. That died its own death but here we are again, albeit with the rhetoric coming not from the unions, but now coming from the states. It is being marketed somewhat differently this time.

Why? Why the public schools after ten years? Number one, the public schools have never not been involved. Since the 1960's the public schools have been actively engaged in early childhood programs. The 1960's marked the official entry of federal government funds flowing to public school systems. We had Title 1, which is now Chapter 1, bringing monies some of which were used for preschool programs. We had Headstart, and you must remember that schools are the third largest grantees of Headstart in the country. We have 94-142, services to all the handicapped, which includes, permissively, services for 3 to 5 year olds and now from 0 on up, depending on what the state plan. States have also had their own compensatory education funds and handicapped funds in addition to federal funds. States have been more into compensatory education and less into child care. What we are watching nationally is really a discussion less of child care and the needs of working parents, and much more attention to remediation.

What we are are watching nationally is really a discussion less of child care and the needs of working parents, and much more attention to remediation.

Why, with all the federal money coming down, are still only a very small fraction of our children in need of preschool education and care services being served? At best only 15-20% of those eligible for Headstart have been served. And we have increasing numbers of children in poverty, which has been used as one indicator of need for service. The other thing is that this is the tail end of the educational reform movement. We started out at the top with high school outcomes. We have moved down to elementary school outcomes. Preschool was not first on anyone's agenda.

There is also the public relations aspect to all of this. We have the well-publicized findings from High/Scope of the Perry Preschool Project which speaks to both short and long term outcomes. Less known are the Absidarian outcomes, the Chapel Hill longitudinal studies, the Brookline Early Education, and the Headstart

findings. Irrespective of the Synthesis Project, there are positive findings from Headstart. All of this contributes to a general perception that you can go out there and provide one or two years of 2½ to 3 hour programs and down the pike, nineteen or twenty years from now, you will lessen adolescent pregnancy, you will have a well-employed, non-welfare-dependent population. I'm saying it in that way because I feel that many of our programs have been oversold, that we are promising more than we can deliver.

Another issue is that, as a nation, we've become more aware of the importance of early education, so that in families who can afford it, increasing

In families who can afford it, increasing numbers of children are receiving pre-primary opportunities, while poor children are only half as likely to receive that same experience.

numbers of children are receiving nursery school or pre-primary opportunities and that number climbs year by year. Poor children are only half as likely to receive that same experience. And there are a growing number of poor children. We know about the dramatic increase of working mothers—it hits all socio-economic groups and, in fact, 52% or higher of women with children under the age of 6 are in the labor force—it is the normative thing for the first time in our history in peacetime. The current baby boomlet has put added pressure on a system ill-equipped to handle the pressure.

But perhaps even more persuasive are the demographic imperatives. We are a nation with a falling fertility rate, but not in all groups. Among minorities and the poor, high birth rates are holding and will continue to hold. There is a growing concern about the composition and preparedness of a labor force. And if you look at one of my favorite examples: the reasons given for some of the reforms in South Carolina revolve around the building of the Saturn plant. They had to have a well-prepared work force.

Contributing to these general trends you also have an increasing sophistication at the state level. Reagan's federalism worked in the sense that it has forced on the states added responsibility for many of their own programs. But it is also fair to say, they had many years of practice because there were federal funds to administer and they have developed expertise. And the competence we look for out of Washington can now increasingly be found at the state level. Young, energetic and politically ambitious governors have played a role because much of what we see is a top down. It is not a ground swell from the grass roots for educational reform, but it is rather top down legislation that is being passed. It is stemming out of governors' offices, of planning and policy departments, or from state superintendents of education. This is not a ground swell and the dangers, of course, are that the people who need to be involved are not going to be involved in shaping the programs. That is one of the things we need to talk about. These governors are well-versed in human capital ideas, their investments in human capital are quite overt. Education, including pre-school education, is part of that. They are also putting together programs called Healthy Start which speaks to health needs of mothers and babies. There is lots going on.

However, they can't do it all with their own funds. At the time this window of opportunity seemed to open, states were flush—there were budget surpluses. The budget surpluses were in part a direct result of the recession when people were cut off of welfare—you save enough money, you shrink your economy, then your economy booms and this is what you are seeing, a rejuvenated economy in many states. That's when many of these program came to be. But what is going on right now? Unfortunately, the economy is contracting for many states. There is a very

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serious problem because there is already a pattern of the states trimming back on education monies. States that are dependent on revenues from natural resources, oil and gas and heavy manufacturing are hit very hard. They will not be able to sustain what is now going on. The window of opportunity has already begun to close in many instances.

At this point we have roughly 20 states which have passed legislation. 5 states have had preschool programs for varying lengths of time.

California, of course, is the granddaddy of all: it has had its own state early childhood programs, and when Headstart came in it also brought in another half-day program which is the state parallel to Headstart. It is incredible how these programs operate side-by-side, often in the same building, and it is unique. New York has had a demonstration preschool program for many years. Pennsylvania is one of the those states where schools had permission to offer preschool; the first year the district had to pay and thereafter preschool is under regular per pupil reimbursement by the state. New Jersey, in permissive legislation, provides for four year olds to be served in half-day sessions with state reimbursements. Maryland has had its programs for roughly five years and is increasingly moving to some kind of universalism—at least in certain counties and in Baltimore city. Three states, instead of a preschool program, have increased their contribution to Headstart. Maine has increased its contribution so that at least every county will be able to serve 25% of its eligible children. Alaska contributes 40% (instead of 20%) of the Headstart costs for the state. And the state of Washington has just passed 2.7 million for Headstart—they could not fund their preschool initiative, but they did get through this Headstart piece. Two states, Missouri and Minnesota are concentrating on educating parents, not on preschoolers, and that is their avenue toward improving child outcomes. Nine states and

Public preschool programs basically serve a very discrete population. The parameters by which people become eligible are low income, low achievement, language barriers (i.e. Limited English Proficiency, developmental delay, or test scores.)

D.C. have passed legislation or have put in budget language which has given rise to demonstration programs, usually very targeted programs either as initial pilot programs or restricted to the number of programs the dollars will buy.

A number of states are still studying the issue. Connecticut has filed bills. But the federal government, despite the cut-backs and possibility of further cut-backs under Gramm-Rudman, still has the over-riding interest in preschool education. They spend roughly $2 billion a year, while the states, at most, spend about a half a billion in the area of preschool education. Not unexpectedly, the majority of dollars are to be spent for early childhood education are in California.

What are these programs? Who do they serve? They basically serve a very discrete population. The parameters by which people become eligible are low income, low achievement, language barriers, (i.e. Limited English Proficiency, developmental delay, or test scores.) In enactment after enactment, that is what you hear and that is what you see. The programs are typically offered for half a day.

What are the problems? With a fiscal slowdown while reform is still a priority, it is questionable whether the states that have passed and funded programs can maintain the momentum to increase funding. South Carolina is talking about just holding steady what it has funded, and it has exemplary legislation, as does Massachusetts. Although we haven't funded anything yet, in Massachusetts our legislation is beautiful. Does any state have the dollars available for state-wide implementation? Texas mandated preschool service state-wide, but is probably not going to have the dollars to implement what it has mandated.

States probably do not have the dollars now and never had the dollars to implement high quality programs. If you offer a two and a half hour program to groups of 22 children with 1 adult five days a week, what are the outcomes you can expect? Are we really undermining other programs by siphoning oney off for these programs that are being implemented at 22 to 1 ratios? This is the mandated child/staff ratio in Texas. Kindergarten customarily has ratios in many states of 21-25 to 1, so while you consider it

While you may consider staff ratios of 22 to 1 scandalous, remember we are not talking about the developmental needs of children. We are talking about cognitive gain. Very few programs address comprehensive services for the whole child or the developmental needs of children.

scandalous, remember we are not talking about the developmental needs of children, necessarily. We are talking about cognitive gain. Very few programs address comprehensive services for the whole child or the developmental needs of children.

In terms of implementing these program, the very way that legislation is passed makes funding percipitous. In other words, today I announce a request for proposals and tomorrow they are due. That does not give communities a time to plan or engage in dialogue or involve the parents or the child care community, or anyone else, in really meaningful planning. Because these initiatives tend to be developed top down, there are often no provisions for local input. In only a few states, Massachusetts is one, has the day care community being actively engaged in how the bill was shaped. South Carolina paid attention to citizen involvement, to real parent participation, both at the state coordinating level and then the local level. In addition to precipitous funding, you have top down funding without enough attention to content and process issues. Very few states mandate local needs assessment, so what you get is maybe duplicative or not filling gaps in a useful way. In some of the states which have passed legislation, the legislation is viewed as burdensome on the local district. Mandates must be implemented but the state in some instances does not provide sufficient funds.

Staffing issues are rampant. There is no consensus on who should staff these programs, and

You suddenly bring in a large number of young children who need very good teaching and you depend on this declining pool of teachers to take up the slack.

each state has different staffing requirements and certification requirements for early childhood teachers. In a situation where we have a declining pool of teachers in general, you suddenly bring in a large number of young children who need very good teaching and you depend on this declining pool of teachers to take up the slack. The real crunch is only coming if states continue to depend on existing systems of recruiting and licensing staff.

We also know that minority teaching staffs are in shorter and shorter supply so we face the problem of not having a minority teaching staff available to serve the very population that is being targeted. I do not see any improvement in the offing in terms of producing a large enough minority staff for the early childhood education programs being planned and/or implemented.

Most of the preschool programs have a very heavy emphasis on cognitive development. While the cognitive is key to one's success in life perhaps

While the cognitive is key to one's success in life perhaps, it is only part of the story and at a very early age developmental issues should receive more attention.

it is only part of the story and at a very early age it is probably the area that should receive less attention while developmental issues should receive more attention. Many of these programs work from the innoculation theory that giving the child some kind of early childhood education will prevent school failure. If you use only the cognitive paradigms, you are going to lose the ability to bring improvement in the lives of the children. And these programs are dealing, by and large, with the most vulnerable children in society. There is a feeling on the part of many people that what we're really doing is pushing the kindergarten curriculum down one step lower. While you already can fail kindergarten, you will now be able to fail pre-school. We're talking about very vulnerable children and their self-esteem. The issues of continuity of care, of family support, of comprehensive services are really not dealt with at all. We are dealing, by and large, with the powerless, poor and minority children.

The dichotomy between day care and education is being pushed even by the studies that are done. There is no sense that we are talking about a whole child who has the need for a continuum of care, that day care and pre-school education are one and the same thing. We can't begin to deal with the reality of parents who must work, who need both for their children—the early childhood education and the care. I think of education and care as a continuum.

Even the studies lose the sense that we are talking about a whole child who needs a continuum of care, that day care and pre-school education are one and the same thing.

There is very little about parent participation in these programs. In very few states are parents legislatively mandated to participate actively. And without that you have a hard time dealing with the issue of control of these programs.

So you are faced with a growing movement, one that has potential for good, but has potential for a great deal of harm, that may not deliver the high quality promised, and therefore our hopes will be dashed unless we pay attention and intervene. That includes the church and the child care community of the church. The church in its larger role has a part to play. The child care community has to actively and aggressively go after a joint dialogue on what's going to happen in the schools. And the churches in their leadership position have a window of opportunity to help shape what it's going to look like at the local level, or what state legislation will be. And one of the things to insist upon is the community participation—to insist upon measures of quality—including class size, including teacher preparation, and I don't mean academic degrees—to look towards the licensing issue, because in many cases the schools are totally exempt from any licensing even though they may in fact be involved in offering the same thing as your local day care center. The churches can play a key role in addressing the quality issue by insisting on a reasonable child/staff ratio; that there be a curriculum; that the children be given some continuum of care. Those are things the churches can ask for and do as leaders in their communities. It seems to me that until they are engaged with these issues, both at a state level and a local level, the schools will go after these programs because it enlarges what is for them, even with the baby boomlet, a shrinking population. Day care is a wonderful way of keeping your school open in the face of declining enrollment.

Churches can play a kep role in addressing the quality issue by insisting on a reasonable child/staff ratio; that there be a curriculum; that the children be given some continuum of care.

These programs are much needed, I'm not knocking those programs, but schools increasingly have enlarged their scope. It is not the issue of not letting schools participate; it is in helping shape the level and the way in which schools provide the service as one of a whole range of providers. No one owns child care or early childhood education in this country. We are not a monolithic society. We do not have a system. We have a non-system. As much as some of us tear our hair over the non-system and its glitches, there are also strengths in that non-system. The strengths are in the pluralism of a wide range of providers providing for a wide range of people who need services. The churches have a vital role to play both as active participants and providers and in the dialogue which will help ensure that the quality of what's out there is good for our kids.

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CARLA CURTIS
National Black Child Development Institute

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I was invited to share with you concerns of the institute that resulted in our publishing this document that has been received quite controversially: Child Care in the Public Schools, Incubator for Inequality. Fern has addressed those concerns very explicitly and very well.

The document which was prepared with care has been recognized as really helping call for a national debate around the growing phenomenon of child care and early childhood development programs being housed in public schools. We published this document first of all because the Institute has traditionally recognized child care as an essential economic support service. It is crucial to enable working parents to participate in the paid labor force, as well as being a primary source of income for many other workers, primarily women, who are employed as both family day care providers or center-based providers. NBCDI is a national membership

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organization composed primarily of black parents and black community advocates of all walks of life who share a concern and interest about the quality of life of black children. We have 33 affiliates across the country, and they are all engaged in service or advocacy projects on behalf of the children in their communities. What we were hearing from them was a growing concern that they were the last to learn about impending legislative initiatives, budgetary line items that would allow for early childhood programs and child care programs or extended day programs in public schools. They said, "We need some information. We need a tool that we can use to influence this debate in our local communities. We have some mixed feelings and concerns about what is happening and how it is happening." Thus the report. It is not an empirical, quantitative research piece. It is more of a qualitative research piece that offers an important perspective on housing child care and early childhood programs in public schools. What are the issues of quality from a black perspective and how can the black community help inform the public policy debate around this issue?

With the advent of the Reagan Administration, we witnessed the beginning of cuts in all of our programs for the poor and services to children and families. There were declining federal dollars available at a time of growing need. People in the advocacy community tried to come up with some alternatives which would not result in such a devastating impact on services.

Since, historically there has been an involvement with schools in providing early childhood education, it seems that a logical response might be to look to the schools to offer additional support; to increase the numbers and types of programs they were providing for young children. While recognizing a place for public schools in child care networks and systems in a diversity model, the Institute is concerned not to move too quickly on an issue simply for the sake of expediency and for the sake of trying to address policy crises. There are many facets within a community that will be affected by such movements. What I would like to focus on are a few concerns in which our perspective is particularly critical.

One of the key components of quality in early childhood development programs is staff. When

There is an assumption that by moving to the public schools we are going to help upgrade the whole child care worker profession and get better salaries for providers.

you look at staff and staff training, a major concern is salary. One of the reasons the schools have been looked to is the concern about salaries and the assumption that by moving to the public schools we are going to help upgrade the whole child care worker profession and get better salaries for providers. Well, you can look at that in one of two ways. You may, in fact, help to increase the salaries of a few who are able to secure their teacher certification if they don't

already have it. But what does this do to the existing network of child care providers in community based programs? A case in point, in the District of Columbia there is a new initiative which introduced a demonstration early childhood development program for four year olds in the schools. It is an all day program, i.e. it is an all day program on the sense of being an all "school day" program. This program is not available throughout the entire school district, but is available in 40 targeted schools. There is one umbrella organization in the District of Columbia that co-ordinates services for 23 child care center-based programs considered to be of high quality—having head teachers who all have their bachelors of arts degree at least. This one organization has provided all the teachers for the school-initiated program in D.C. Not all these teachers have been replaced in the center based child care programs and it has been a terrible drain. Yet no one can blame the workers; they are going from a $15,000 a year job to a $24-28,000 a year job on average as a certified classroom teacher.

Even in The District of Colombia where there's been a strong commitment to early childhood programs for many years, they have not been able to get the monies available to address the issue of quality as it relates to staff ratios.

Related to salaries is the issue of staff/child ratios to insure a minimum level of quality. Research by the feds, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and other organizations shows that you need to have staff/child ratios of no more than ten children per one provider for four and five year olds. So if you're looking at a class of twenty, you must have at least two adults—a teacher and possibly a teacher aide. The District of Columbia is one of those communities that is known to have an exemplary system of early childhood programs. There has been a history of commitment to early childhood programs going back to 1968 when they first started their pre-school initiative in the District. Now we have the new initiative with the four year olds, and the Mayor'sschool age child care program and the District-sponsored extended day child care program. However, the school board passed regulations that say, when you have early childhood programs for five year olds, there should be a staff-child ratio of 1 to 20—one adult per 20 children. In fact, what exists in most of the classrooms is a situation of 1 teacher per 25 or more children. Even in the experimental program for the four year olds which they said should have a staff-child ratio of one teacher to every ten children, many of the classrooms do not have the extra aide. The coordinator of the program in the District admits to this. It's a funding issue. In a community where there's been a strong commitment to early childhood programs, they have not been able to get the monies available to address the issue of quality as it relates to staff ratios.

Turnover rate is another issue. All occupations within education and social service providers have a 42% turnover rate. And when you look at family day care providers there's a 59% turnover rate, twice the national average in all other professions. This is directly related to salaries, to fringe benefits and to stress in terms of working conditions. This information was recently compiled in a publication by NAEYC entitled "In Whose Hands?" It looks at employment trends in child care from a national perspective and what is happening demographically related to child care.

Another issue is related to labelling and targeting of programs. We are talking about "low achievers", "low income kids", "developmentally disabled youngsters" who have difficulty, who show a deficit with regard to some standardized test. One of the things that we did in our report was to come out with safeguards for all early childhood development programs be they in public schools or not. We addressed testing and its inappropriateness for very young children. Barbara Bowman who is Director of Graduate Studies for the Erickson Institute and sits on NBCDI's National Child Care Advisory Panel has guided this discussion and has been instrumental in the development of this report and particularly in terms of identifying the safeguards. We have traditionally had a system of federally supported child care that many have said has actually been a disservice to children in terms of how it has segregated children, particularly around racial and economic lines. The target groups served by these programs are not heterogeneous along racial and ethnic lines and social-economic status. Title XX supported programs that serve poor children, minority

We are concerned about the stigma of being labelled "learning disabled" just so a child can have some limited early childhood education experience.

children predominately. Recognition of value of early childhood programming would indicate the importance for all children. Of course, anybody will tell you that's not realistic; you can't fund such a system of care. The short-sightedness of policy often results in long-term problems. We have some concerns about the stigma of being labelled "learning disabled" or some such phrase that a child then carries throughout the educational process just so they can have some limited early childhood experience. That is not said facetiously; it is a fact. Some parents have been approached and told, "If you sign this form and allow your child to be placed in this program, at least you will give this child a two or three hour experience each day they would not have otherwise." Funds aren't available just because you are a working parent and you have a need for child care. But if you will agree to have your child labelled and channeled into a special system, you can oftentimes receive some assistance.

Even though we praise the whole concept of Headstart and recognize its benefits, it too is basically a deficit model. We need to reverse this trend in our thinking, because in the long term it is not going to help children.

A community based network of child care providers may not be recognized or brought in or made part of child care initiatives because of the attitude most public school systems in this country have toward outsiders. They may not be certified, but they have certain credentials and years of experience and skills in serving children.

Schools and the child care community view parent involvement differently. Early childhood programs often see themselves from a social welfare perspective. They look at the parent and the child as a service delivery unit. On the other hand, the school system looks directly at the children, and sees the parent merely as facilitating and cooperating in the educational process as opposed to a genuine partnership in that process. Typically there is little effective parent involvement in most public school systems.

I happen to believe the church can and must play a very vital role in influencing the future for us all, particularly young folks. I think one of the things the church can be very instrumental in doing is in impressing on all segments of the community, regardless of socio-economic status, regardless of ethnicity and denomination that we have a responsibility to assume the care for our young people. And we have a responsibility for the problems that exist among them behaviorially, attitudinally. I think the church has to play a vital role in identifying what criteria should be used in evaluating all aspects of child care programs. I think we can, as members of congregations, be instrumental in directing what community-based goals and priorities ought to be for services located within our communities.

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WILL KENNEDY
Union Theological Seminary, New York City

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My basic research is in the relationship of ideology to formal education. One area I have been pursuing in the National Council is how this analysis fits the media and now I have to think about how it fits or does not fit child care. It sounds like the same old story. It reminds me of what we have to say in the church periodically—you have to believe in God to work in the church!

Many images come up when I read this material and listen to this meeting. I remember in Geneva, where I was working for the World Council of Churches, a meeting at which Ivan Illich spoke. To celebrate its 50th Anniversary the International School of Geneva held a symposium. They also had a young Labor Member of Parliament from Britain and a French "functionnaire" in the Ministry of Education in Geneva. Illich led off with a blast at what was then becoming popular called "Lifelong Education". He said, "That's "education permenante," "education interminable." What the schools are really about in the society is to use schooling for the infantilization of the human race."

The young Britisher said, "Well, that might be a good analysis in France, but it would never work in Britain." They had education split up in so many little authorities, he said that they couldn't even organize it for what they wanted it to do, much less what Illich thought they might want to do. Illich was attempting to show the dangers of formal education and its tentacles reaching out and upward into the rest of life. What we are talking about today is the danger of school reaching down to include smaller and younger children.

Then I thought of another image. There was a colleague in the World Council of Churches named Charles Elliott who did a study of what he called Patterns of Poverty, based on 16 or 18 case studies of development efforts in third world countries. Charles developed an image of what he called "confidence mechanisms", "con-mechs" he called them, which were the ideological instruments by which good things unknowingly perpetuated bad things. The basic image was one in which you have a big fishbowl at the bottom, in which the big majority of the population swam. Then a little narrow tube into a smaller fishbowl into which some people, but not by any means the majority, swam. And then a little tiny access tube into a very small one at the top. What happens in these con-mechs is that, you can concentrate on the few individuals swimming upward, instead of everybody swimming around; The whole image is compounded by the difficulty of fish not knowing what the water is because they can't get out of the water.

So it is possible for the power structures to put the spotlight on those little tubes of access and to talk about social mobility. They give publicity to the few who manage to get out of the huge fishbowl into the next level and you study the tokens who make it. You don't talk about the mechanisms by which they make it, that's bad, and you don't talk about what headstart people may have learned swimming around—some can swim faster than others because they had stronger parents or more vitamins or they were closer to where the food was poured in, or whatever it might be.

What he was demonstrating is what I've kept studying: the way society uses formal education to perpetuate privilege. That is not to say that schools do not do some good things. But if you

The way society uses formal education is to perpetuate privilege.

find yourself talking about how schools don't look that bad to us, it may be because they produced us. And furthermore, we get paid well by the knowledge industry. Around this table all of us live "fat" because of the system of education by which we have profited. We are among those who have either climbed up one of those access routes or we were there in some elite to begin with.

What happened to the rest? What happened to the people I graduated from high school with—343 in Spartanburg, South Carolina? When we had our 35th reunion, about a third came back. And they were the ones who by and large had something to brag about, something to show. The rest were not there. They were what Paulo Freire would have called "the cultural silence". They had internalized a sense of failure.

The majority of people are taught that they are not worthy of controlling their own lives. We have set up a system that slices the cognitive from the rest of learning and then makes that a privilege. The system does not deal wholistically with the worth of a human being. By those relatively narrow and angular judgments, society internalizes it and sends the huge majority of people out thinking they do not deserve to make the decisions for the society or for their own lives. They are taught dependency on those who

The majority of people are taught that they are not worthy of controlling their own lives; people leave school thinking they do not deserve to make the decisions for society.

succeed and the society wants that perpetuated. Now, I may be overstating this, but not much. I was struck by what was said earlier, that it was now possible for a three year old to internalize failure.

You have a way of internalizing that sense of failure, when you start talking about the deficiency. Against what is something deficient? Standardized tests are the slickest way of personalizing failure. When somebody makes it up to the higher level, you point to the goodness of

Standardized tests are the slickest way of personalizing failure. When somebody makes it up to the higher level, you point to the goodness of the system and social mobility. When somebody doesn't make it up there, you point to the individual failure.

the system and social mobility. When somebody doesn't make it up there, you point to the individual failure. Or you build that competition up to include the teachers who control a little bit of that access. And you set up merit pay. You force teachers to compete on a win/lose basis in what is fundamentally a cooperative activity of helping people learn.

Then you set up competition among states. The reason Georgia adopts reforms, or South Carolina makes changes, is that they had a bad reputation that kept industry from moving in. It is more public relations than public education that drives them. Now we are setting up international competition based on lower wages and education is an instrument of that game. Look at Haiti for instance.

Then you have to ask what does it mean to be human in all this? One of the things I try to do in groups is to ask them to think about getting up with God and look at the creation and ask the question, What do you think God is angry about? Ask it as you think about God's creating it all, and every person—4.5 billion human beings on this globe. And ask yourself what do you think pleases God? Well, you can imagine what comes out. I tried it with a bunch of young people down in Virginia several years ago and one of the things that came out was that what pleases God is a baby. Why would a baby please God? The 15 year olds saw the potential of that. And that's part of the excitment of what is at work. How do we happen to have a system that does people in, when we start off that excited theologically? Humanely?

I want to share with you a little known report, Choosing Equality: The Case for Democratic Schooling. It criticizes all the other recent education reports. I mean it blasts them. Bless the New World Foundation and David Ramage and Colin Greer and their colleagues. It is an extremely insightful analysis of the whole cyclical game that we are now in again. This report says all the crisis in education hoopla fundamentally is a way of maintaining the meritocratic elitism of the school system as it

All the crisis in education hoopla fundamentally is a way of maintaining the meritocratic elitism of the school system as it has developed historically in the United States.

has developed historically in the United States. The same game happens in other countries of the Western World as well. Choosing Equality talks about different things like the "Myth of the Golden Age." They say, when was it really any different? The schools have always reproduced the stratification of society on economic and social terms. What happens is you have a generation that is privileged and after all the schooling efforts and the social mobility of the few, you've got the same situation. The children

of farmers tend still to be poor, the children of blacks still tend to be poor, the children of lower class people still tend to be lower class, etc., etc. So we have been sold a myth that there was a Golden Age when it worked well.

Basil Bernstein, who is at the University of London, Institute of Education, said in a lecture that formal schooling around the world, in every culture we know, tends to do three things. The first is to separate mental from manual labor and it privileges the mental. The second thing it does is to exercise symbolic control. It determines what knowledge is of most worth. It determines the language used to describe it. The third thing it does, by the credentialling system, is to help control access to the power that knowledge represents.

The second myth this report talks about is the "Myth of the Reforms of the Sixties". They analyze it as the battle that goes on between political democracy and economic elitism. We are not used to analyzing things in the US in class terms—Marxist categories. (It is not accidental. If you roam around in other cultures you find that most people who have been educated for as many years as we have around this table, have studied Marxism as a matter of course. It is harder for us to get at it, because we are kept in a school system and media system that does not make these connections easily.) Without talking about Karl Marx, this analysis poses it in very clear terms, I think. What we have is an economic elitism that the schools perpetuate with competition, and a democratic egalitarianism where we supposedly all share as citizens in determining what goes on. Now that's what you can call a contradiction. It is a shift from "exclusive meritocracy" to more "inclusive meritocracy"—that's what happened in the reforms of the 60's, but it was still meritocracy. It was a battle between education as tool of universal empowerment or of selective mobility.

The third myth was the "Myth of Economic Imperative". We are heading toward a time when there are fewer top jobs and therefore even fewer chances of success. So even if this is your ideology of schooling, you are moving into narrower and narrower focus. Through the ideological use of the term "middle class" we mask a lot; but it is getting unmasked pretty fast. What is happening in our society is that that middle fish bowlis getting squeezed and the majority of people are getting to be in a lower class economic level and fewer and fewer people at the top. As that becomes clearer the old game of the schools is in more and more threat. As it gets exposed, what is

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really happening becomes clearer and clearer. Therefore, there are more and more people savvy about it.

What I see needed is to discover how those of us who are feeling thse sensitivies for the little people—three and four years old—can make coalition with the larger forces in society who are feeling the same oppression.

Another example of oppression: statistically those of you who are women represent the sex group in this society who get paid 62% across the board of what male types doing the same work. One of the problems of elementary school and preschool as you push it down is that you make the connection with the oppressed women in our society. And when you hook the women and the ethnic and the class together, you get a huge instrumentality or mechanism of which child care is a part. Now why is that not clearer? Well, we've been taught not to hook it up. The kind of schooling we've had has not made those connections. If you add up all your years of schooling and ask where you began to get a picture of it like this, you will see that it was avoided. Now the issue is, as the pressure builds, the instrumentality needs to get more efficient with the whole game, and so you get the myth of economic imperative expanding to swallow up three year olds.

Let me mention the terms we used here and loaded they are. Preschool, that is like calling you non-male, or non-white, or non-rich. Child care, that word "care" is loaded, basically it is loaded positively. But in this kind of context it has overtones of manipulation and enhancement of dependency—the infantilization of the human race kind of thing. Or another term you often hear is custodial services. You have school till three o'clock and then you have custodial services. Or, the term we haven't used this

morning, that is used often is in loco parentis. Of course a custodian might be a lot more benign than a teacher or a principal. It cuts both ways.

Jean Fairfax has an arresting phrase: "Children who are not permitted to be children." That's where the difference between the two come together. Why is it that preschool in the privileged communities tends to pick up the cognitive so strongly? It is really gearing people for the hot competition of the economic meaning of what it means to be human. There is a connection between letting a child be a child and

Preschool in the privileged community is really gearing people for the hot competition of the economic meaning of what it means to be human.

what we dream about when we talk about a democracy, of letting people be people and rejoice in what it means to be human and rejoice in the differences and not to privilege a certain part of what it means to be human, namely the cognitive. Paolo Freire has a new book called the Politics of Education. He really would have liked to coin a term called "the politicity of education". It is not that education has politics, but that education is politics. And what this whole analysis is exposing is the dangers of letting the negative side of what's happening in the larger arena extend itself downward. That really forces us to the kind of thing that both of you ended on.

What are the kinds of leads where there is free space, where there is challenge, where there is a sense of a difference, local control, parental involvement, where in loco parentis is made real, not just turned over to somebody. How do you get that sort of freeing up? How do you let a thousand flowers bloom?

In the process what I want to add is to take a theological look at what it means to be human. The last two or three centuries made us think of what it means to be human in terms of economic competitors and consumers and individuals. Anybody who is sensitive to little children is going to try to help them learn values quite different from those societal values.

Our theology still informs our work with three year olds. We inevitably help them learn how to get along, how to share. We do not allow them to start life by learning how to beat the other one up.

Our theology still informs our work with three year olds. We inevitably help them learn how to get along, how to share. We do not allow them to start life by learning how to beat the other one up on a win/lose model. Deep down we know that those are the truly important values.

Then how do you use that experience to look organizationally at the larger picture and say politically, how do we get together with folks who are concerned about that because they've been beaten down as Blacks, or they've been beaten down as Hispanics, or they've been beaten down as women, or as gay/lesbians or whatever. Here is a coalition potential with much larger forces, in which we believe God is at work. In the Jewish-Christian tradition what we are talking about here is what pleases God when God looks down at the mess. What pleases God is attempts to find ways to develop people humanely in societies that don't tilt it to the privilege of a few on narrow bases of judgment. That's my sermon.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DISCUSSION

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Fern Marx: The deficit model is a medical model and it is important to recognize that all these programs are built on that kind of model. It is not a wholeness model, it is not a health model, it is a sickness model. It is a zero sum model. If you keep remembering that, it helps you understand the shape of things. For instance, one needs to be alert to what is going on in the communities (Carla said the day care community knew nothing about an enactment in South Carolina), this is entirely conceivable because in fact this enactment is seen as simply moving us to zero sum. The schools often see themselves as the one viable locus of services, i.e. the child care community should not have a part in it, the churches should not have a part in it. That exclusionary view of the world is very frightening. Schools are good at that and it builds the mistrust that is already there in many communities. Clearly those of us who have been fortunate and privileged don't distrust our schools because they serve our needs very well, they have given us and our children access and I would suggest that the Charles Elliot analogy is very pertinent for the 1960's because it allowed just enough through that little narrow track to give the illusion which perpetuates the myth. These programs with their targetting do not grant full access. In fact, if our experience with 94-142 services to the handicapped, is any illustration, the minute you have labelled a child, those labels hold. The concept of mainstreaming has never taken hold and there is a lot of revisionism. It is important to look at the language we use and the real danger of testing and the authenticity of testing children of that age which may come in with incredible ethnic and racial bias. Who controls the choice of test? Who is the gate keeper in this game? I think there is a real cause for concern. Right now we are still faced with hype more than reality. But the reality will follow. If we want to control that reality, it means you become involved.

Carla Curtis: One of the main concerns we've expressed is the masking of early childhood as a catch-all solution to all the world's ills. Particularly here in New York City there is an alarming trend. I attended a hearing on drop-out preventions and one of the threads that constantly went through that whole hearing process is the need to begin earlier to address the deficiencies of children before they come in to a school setting. I became almost sick by the time it finished, because I said, my God, you are going to have drop-outs now in first grade! We haven't recognized the failures that have already occured. We haven't recognized where they are occuring and what contributes to that failure, why youngsters don't feel the need to connect to any school or why the parents can't connect. We've just ignored that and decided we'd start earlier.

Fern Marx: There is pressure within the systems now to start earlier, just to end earlier. Some say we should no longer have mandatory education to 16, but drop below that age, because 15 and 16 is where we lose them. Since we cannot offer them anything they want we might as well drop back to ages we can keep in school.

June Rogers: I heard a recent example of a church that was going to include its minority children in liturgy. The pastor invited a Black youngster to read Scripture and a Hispanic youngster to read a litany. On the appointed morning, one of them had laryngitis and the other didn't show up. What does this say about the early internalizing of failure?

Will Kennedy: In Geneva in the early 1970s I heard a Yugoslav woman explain that the government guarantees a working mother with a baby return to her job after three years, at the same level, and pays her the same wages to be a mother for those first three years. Then there is child care in the factory where the mothers can go to be with them if there is an emergency. I was astounded, because it hadn't even occurred to me to face what would happen if Frances didn't stay home and take care of the kids. That was because I was living privileged; I had no idea there was any other way to do it.

Fern Marx: It might be very instructive to think about those women that we pay to stay at home, through the welfare system. What does the level of pay they receive tell us? What do we pay those who care for our young children? This is a social comment on the value of our children, on the value the people who provide that care and education.

Will Kennedy: There is one more angle. Joe Hough out at the Claremont School of Theology, says that the history of voluntary associations in the USA—churches, do-good groups, reform movements, etc.—is that you start with lay people who get active. Then you get to the stage of organization where they need to hire somebody to keep them active. Then pretty soon they are hiring somebody to do the work for them. So we move to an economic way of dealing with it that involves money paid. Whatever the future economic pattern is in this country and this world, it looks like we are going to have less money and more time. The implications of that for local churches or for staffing is that we may need to find another way of dignifying labor other than by money. Or we may need to arrange a barter economy where a good meal every day is part compensation for the people who are aides or whatever in child care so you don't have the whole mechanism of salaries which then have trouble getting enough to do it right. We are really being forced to explore new ways of putting the whole mix together.

Kenyon Burke: We are coming to the point where we are going to have to redefine what we call work. That is very threatening to the learning institution industry. The voluntary organizations are not what they were at the turn of the century.

June Rogers: One of the issues of volunteers is that they are often not paid attention to or taken seriously. There is no status to being a volunteer. The pay sometimes is not that important, but being listened to is. Moving to a paid position makes a whole lot of difference in terms of access.

Nanette Roberts: I am distressed by the intensely negative quality of much that has been said today. Negative in terms of programs that are out there—the programs and their achievements. Very negative about the value of the cognitive—I got the greatest joys of my life from schooling. I would like to ask you, are there any positives you see on the horizon? Are there any things you applaud? Are there any good things we can do for the four year olds that we love, and be of assistance to them?

June Rogers: I wouldn't want anyone to get away from here without knowing that we are very proud of the 12,000 church-housed child care programs around the country that are moving in diverse ways to being responsive to young children and their families.

After lunch—

Margaret Shafer: Our concern at the National Council of Churches is: 1) how to understand the issues so that we can develop the best possible policy, and 2) how to get these issues and concerns on the agenda of the churches. By the churches I mean our denominational bodies who are members of the National Council, and I also mean the local congregations all over the country. Churches are one of the strongest community based organizations in our society. Churches have an incomparable infrastructure of communications and facilities for service. We broke before lunch with the question about the positives. I had a discussion with Fern while we stood in line for salad and she made a point that is very important: it is often in the practice, in the individual situation, where the really fine things happen. The overall picture may be terrible, it may be destructive even, but that is not to negate the good that happens in those practical, interpersonal contacts, and the arrangement of the small. You cannot just extrapolate one from the other. There are qualitative differences between the overall picture and the particular happenings.

Rhonda Smith (who had been asked to give an initial response to the panel from the point of view of a concrete local experience):

First, let me tell you a little about my program in New York City called, Childcare Inc. for which I work. It is an information and referral service. We provide a telephone database of all childcare programs in New York City and even do referrals out to neighboring communities for parents. It is a multi-faceted organization. In addition to information and referral, we have a strong technical unit serving existing programs as well as programs trying to start. And we have the employee services division that seeks to link between the corporate business community and the child care needs of their employees. Also we are trying to provide a role for private industry in doing something about the need for child care. And we have our advocacy and grassroots organizing unit which is a long-term attempt to impact public policy. We work on state level and city level, and sometimes on national level.

When we heard about the Mayor's Early Childhood Commission we were very fearful: here is another problem we've got to tackle. What are we going to do? Lots of our constituents called us from Headstart and the Day Care community. Then we began to tell people, this is the time when you must become most visible and most vocal. We think if we do this, we can effect what is identified as a quality program. We also saw that the Commission was stacked with wonderful people and they were ready to reach out to the child care community and really look for the best way to begin their research. We developed a startegy of identifying and publicizing exemplary programs, both private and public. We tried to be everywhere all the time and tried to say over and over again what we thought good child care was. One of the most heartening things was that in coming together, both the child care and the public school community found that their stereotypes were unhelpful. At one breakfast meeting in particular people were seated so that they had to get to know each other from the different sectors, and we discovered a lot of concern for children, a common concern that outweighed our differences. At the same time we worked at the state level. We worked particularly on the wholeness of the child—that separating out education from child care created problems and that shifting children around from place to place was not good. We found some significant differences between the city and upstate, and we became much more sensitive to the things going on elsewhere in New York State and in other states as well. We built a much broader coalition through this process.

In terms of our state initiatives and state funding. We both lost and gained. We didn't get all the money we wanted, but we got further in establishing the need for day care than we ever had before. There was real concern about getting a big infusion of money for one year only and not being able to ensure funding after that. Also, we felt it would be good to slow the process down—sometimes that is necessary—to build a broader coalition. And to acknowledge that what we are talking about does cost an awful lot of money, and you've got to do it right.

Another issue for us is who is assigned to early childhood classrooms. Who are those teachers? What is their background? Do they know anything about little children? Do they like the tiny youngsters? And then, there are physical facilities. What kind of bathrooms are there for little children? Health codes being waived for young children is such a problem. Sometimes they are waived secretly. We have also talked about serving the children of poor families who live in economically depressed neighborhoods. But these are the same neighborhoods that have overcrowded schools and the oldest facilities that are the least adequate for young children. We also looked at teacher turnover, some programs are staffed by substitutes. We talked about the way monies are allocated in school districts—some districts have all kinds of wonderful materials and even have health components that the districts have put special money in. But another district doesn't have the money so they don't get the services.

We are concerned about a shrinking allocation to Headstart—it has been quiet, but little by little it is shrinking. Also, programs that are not unionized cannot offer competitive salaries.

Fern Marx: One of the most difficult problems is that in trying to raise the salaries and making them competitive you can price yourself right out of the market and what you get is a re-segregation of child care.

Fern Marx: The pathological model extends right into the child care community itself. There was a survey recently of infant and toddler care givers whose pervasive attitude was, parents belong at home.

Paul Goodman: Stigimatizing is a terribly difficult problem. I worked in a Special Education School in Connecticut. 90% of our students came from one school system. The question was never raised, what is the matter with that school system. The remark always was, what a lot of pathological families that town has! It was the individual family's pathology and deficiency that were assumed to be the problem.

Margaret Shafer: Labelling is difficult because in the school system where I taught, and in many other, the only way you could get services for youngsters that needed help was to allow them to be labelled.

Rhonda Smith: Very few corporations provide child care. It may be that we can begin to move that forward if child care can be seen as a flexible benefit that an employer can allow. Perhaps we can begin to provide some child care without tax dollars.

Will Kennedy: This is an example of public funds having to provide for private needs. It is the same kind of thing with the schools having to provide computer training, so that industry doesn't have to train them. Private profit companies have not taken over the responsibility that they need to pay, if they want people who happen to be parents, to work for them.

Fern Marx: Even so, this is where we see program for the rich, not for the poor. Most people are not employed by huge corporations, they are employed by small businesses. We cannot be dependent on any one way to provide child care.

June Rogers: We've seen lots of examples of corporations providing day care as a recruiting mechanism to attract young executives. But as soon as the company puts out the upfront costs, the maintenance of the programs becomes so expensive, people in the lower echelons are closed out of it.

All Our Children is a study by an interdisciplinary group. They found you couldn't really look at the needs of children without looking at the needs of families. And they found they couldn't look at the needs of families without looking at what was going on in society. They began to disspell a whole lot of myths we have lived with regarding children and families.

Fern Marx: One of the things we must look at most closely is that most providers of child care and users of child care are women. The estimation of their value is very low in our society. Combine that valuing with the conviction that women belong in the home. As long as society buys and the church buys those assumptions, we are going to be barking up a tree.

June Rogers: If the women don't get out there and advocate for child care, they are not going to have it. However, even the national women's groups that I know of do not have that on their agenda.

Margaret Shafer: There seems to be a real blindness, perhaps born of pain, which means that unless you have an immediate and personal need for child care you are not going to concern yourself with it. We have not succeeded in building a community of concern, even among those who can remember how desperately they needed it when they needed it.

June Rogers: The society operates on the male-oriented view that we don't really have children. Someone else worries about the children. If you happen to have children you have to cope the best way you can, but if you are going to work you are going to have to pretend you don't have children. Until we own up as communities—as men and women together—that we need to provide for our children, we cannot succeed. That may be utopian, but for the churches, I think that is the kind of statement that needs to be made.

Russell Hicks: After school programs face the problem of people being unwilling to pay for them..."It's only two hours. I almost don't need it. I'm certainly not going to invest much money in it."

Faith Johnson: The growth of single parent families makes it even more important to concentrate on this need for child care. As we move more and more into a workfare rather than a welfare society, the problem becomes more serious. The issues become more poignant in terms of unregulated care and low quality care for the most vulnerable population of children.

Fern Marx: The church has a real role in speaking to the quality of day care. It is part of our concern and view of the child. We, as a society, do not care for our children. We do not feed our children. This concern for children almost becomes a missionary cause. What is doubly discouraging is when the churches begin to fight the battle against regulations; when they don't want the safety and health standards applied to themselves, we are in trouble.

June Rogers: Our NCCC statement of policy is very clear on this. We must support licensing. Wherever there are attempts to work against them, we should be right out there testifying against those church groups. Very often it is an effort to save a penny, at the expense of child safety.

Fern Marx: There is much that can be done at the local level, in each community. We may not be able to affect national day care policy, but there is a great deal to be done locally, and that is where the role of the churches comes in so strongly. The church is a major institution in each community. It can become a strong advocate, it can be neutral, or it can fight a rear guard action.

Will Kennedy: The kind of analysis that we've been doing is so heavily tilted toward determinism that it is easy to be enslaved. But if you think of education as rolling with history and helping with the need to adjust to the big things, you can see how many different people are being heard in new ways. What will prevent the coalition that will lead to massive structural change, unless the system that is determined not to change can get us fighting each other? How can we put together the mounting dissatisfaction and help it be clear and focus it so that the coalitions emerging will have political power? We don't know how to do this very well, but our experience in the 60's with community organizations gives us some good leads. Even the way of putting it that "women are their own worst enemies" is the wrong way of putting it; the enemy is the controlling power.

Margaret Shafer: I think that is such an important point that we ought to end with it ringing in our ears. We must not be divided from one another on the smaller issues, we must be united on the great issue. The challenge to the churches is to care about children. Where are children in our society? How can their needs be cared for? How can we all work together on it? If there was ever an issue that spoke to what churches are all about, that's it!

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A RESOLUTION

of the

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE U.S.A.

475 Riverside Drive

New York, NY 10115

FOUR-YEAR-OLDS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(Adopted by the Governing Board May 22, 1986)

BACKGROUND

There is a national crisis in child care. Dramatically increasing numbers of working families of every race and income stratum need child care. Many young children need and can benefit from an enriched and planned environment and readiness activities. Research has demonstrated that investment in early childhood is cost-effective in long-range societal terms. Yet the remarkable and tragic fact is that as the need increases there are new threats to child care programs of all kinds from diminished federal support and disappearing and unaffordable liability and insurance coverage.

Many signs point to one attempt to solve the problem by increasing the involvement of public schools in early childhood care as providers of part-day child development programs and/or full-day child care. Indeed the scarcity of resources forces this consideration. Many communities have in their school systems unused space and administrative systems in place, and thus there is much discussion in our nation over the issue of whether the public schools should be given a primary responsibility for educating and caring for four-year-olds. Two thirds of the states already offer some form of pre-kindergarten program, and state funding for such programs is increasingly proposed.

Yet some in our midst, including the National Black Child Development Institute, made up of leading black child care advocates, have raised serious questions about the capacity of the public school to provide quality education for four year old racial/ethnic minority children. Their concerns are based on research that shows how children from low income areas regardless of race receive an advantage from good quality early childhood educational/enrichment activities. They have noted, however, that many schools which serve a predominantly low-income constituency often are under-financed with little access to sufficient materials (books, paper, etc.) for present programs. Thus, they have urged a "rigorous debate on the merits and motives involved in the impetus to increase developmental programs for young children in the public schools."

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Governing Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., meeting in New Orleans, May 1986, affirms the following principles for decision-making surrounding the issue of four-year-olds in the public school:

1. The delivery of services and the budgetary implications thereof must serve the needs of the four-year-old population. In making the needs of young children paramount, the following issues should be of the highest priority:

*The needs of young children should be given priority over any needs of institutions, such as surplus of teachers or buildings.

*Teachers should be required to have specific training, and/or ongoing inservice training in preschool education.

*The curriculum for preschool-age children should be culturally sensitive and appropriate to the child's age and level of development.

*In assessing children of preschool age, administrators of early childhood programs should not limit their assessment to or base their program planning solely on standardized testing. Preschoolers are too young to test reliably.

*There must be adequate physical plant and personnel to meet the special developmental and programmatic needs of young children.

*Adequate funding must be assured for materials, personnel and curriculum to insure an enrichment rather than a custodial program. These funds should not be removed from or penalize the education of children in other age groups, special-needs groups or income levels. There must be adequate facilities and specialized staff to address the needs of disabled children.

(Children's needs must be met for the sake of the children...Child care, at its best... is to support families in their efforts to provide their children with a total atmosphere conducive to meeting children's needs for wholesome mental, emotional and spiritual development.)---
NCCC Policy Statement on Child Day Care

2. A diversity of programs better guarantees accessibility and excellence.

In some areas public schools have perpetuated social and racial inequalities, while community programs have provided quality, culturally sensitive services. In others, private facilities have served only advantaged children, and school programs have offered developmental care and education. Because families and communities differ, a variety of structures for providing child care must be explored before an appropriate system is identified for each community. To the extent that a child care system relies on a diversity of providers, it will meet more diverse needs. All providers should be monitored for their effectiveness in addressing racism and sexism while nurturing children toward healthy attitudes of diverse racial, cultural and gender groups. This is essential for providing excellent programs of developmental care and education.

(Child care services must draw resources from all sectors of the society.)---
NCCC Policy Statement on Child Day Care)

3. Parental involvement is crucial if child care programs are to provide quality care for young children.

In order for programs to offer continuity to parental care, they

should complement parental preferences and standards. Parents should be involved in the design and development of their child's program and in decisions about curriculum and policy. It is also absolutely essential for parent-child relationships to be reinforced. "Programs cannot adequately meet the needs of children unless they also recognize the importance of the child's family and develop strategies to work effectively with families. All communication between centers and families should be based on the concept that parents are and should be the principal influence in the children's lives." (National Association for the Education of Young Children: Accreditation Criteria and Procedures.) Given this, it is essential that intentional processes be developed for effective communication with single parents, which provide for equal opportunities to children of all races and economic conditions.

(Frequent communications between staff and parents, as well as the invitation to parents to participate in decision making, will support the family.)---
NCCC Policy Statement on Child Day Care

4. Child care programs need to belong to the community and to serve as a bridge between the child's home and the outside world.

Today's child care proposals pay insufficient attention to child development and even less to community needs and cultural values that bear on development. Therefore, child care programs should involve community members and parents and provide significant and sufficient role models for children of every racial/ethnic group. It is essential that child care services be operated by responsive community institutions whether they be public or private.

(Although quality is a legitimate concern in public policy matters relating to child care, the church must caution that this concern not be permitted to eliminate cultural choices, which should rightly be reserved to families...Programs must be responsive to the individual child's needs as well as his/her cultural identity.)---
NCCC Policy Statement on Child Day Care

5. Programs for young children should be concerned about both their education and care.

Much progress has been made over the past 20 years to integrate the education and care of young children. The current debate threatens once again to split these concerns. The tendency in pre-kindergarten programs currently being offered in public schools to be available only three hours a day is of special concern. It is often more difficult for working parents to find part-time child care to "wrap around" the pre-kindergarten hours and day than to find full-time child care, and children are unnecessarily disrupted, psychologically and educationally,

by the shift of caregiver and care site.

(Many factors influence and often determine decisions made by the families...Programs... must meet requirements of appropriate location, hours of operation, ages served, and educational philiosophy.)---
NCCC Policy Statement on Child Day Care

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Governing Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. calls upon:

1. appropriate committees in Congress to hold national hearings to promote a rigorous and open debate on the merits and motives involved in the drive to increase developmental programs for young children in public schools;

2. NCCC member denominations to encourage:

   a. their appropriate agencies to actively participate in debates around this issue on both national and state levels;

   b. the churches in each community to support the establishment of councils on young children, including representatives of all public and private providers of services in each community or utilize existing organizations like child care councils and resource and referral organizations. These groups would keep abreast of changing needs and available resources. Further, they would serve as referral/advocacy services for parents and could be the advisory groups to guide and coordinate governmental policy for all young children, including four-year-olds, as it impacts local communities;

   c. secular and church child care advocates to support the development of a cooperative mix of public and private providers of service in each community.

WHAT CAN BE LEARNED AT SCHOOL

By Robert Fulghum

Socrates insisted that the unexamined life is not worth living and there's wisdom in that to be sure. But the examined life isn't always a picnic either.

In such times I fall back on what I've come to think of as a Kindergarten State of Mind. Most of what I really need to know about how to live, and what to do, and how to be, I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain but there in the sandpile at nursery school.

These are the things I learned:

Share everything.

Play fair. Don't hit people.

Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess.

Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody.

Wash your hands before you eat.

Flush.

Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.

Live a balanced life. Learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.

Take a nap every afternoon.

When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands and stick together.

Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the plastic cup. The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.

Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the plastic cup—they all die.

So do we.

And then remember the book Dick and Jane and the first word you learned, the biggest word of all: LOOK.

Everything you need to know is in there somewhere. The Golden Rule and love and basic sanitation.

Ecology and politics and equality and sane living. Take any one of those items and extrapolate them into sophisticated adult terms and apply them to your family life or your work or your government or your world and they hold true and clear and firm.

Think what a better world it would be if we all—the whole world—had cookies and milk about 3 o'clock every afternoon and then lay down with our blankies for a nap.

Or if the United States of America had as a basic policy to always put things back where it found them and cleaned up its own mess.

And it is still true, no matter how old you are, when you go out into the world it is best to hold hands and stick together.

Look, look.

See Dick, See Jane.

Look, look.

See you, see me, see us, see the world, see the universe, see life, see death, oh look and see!